

COMMISSION ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS



2020 Annual Report to the
Supreme Court of Missouri
December 2020

Supreme Court of Missouri
Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness (CREF)

2020 Report to the Supreme Court of Missouri

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SUPREME COURT OF MISSOURI
COMMISSION ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS
POST OFFICE BOX 104480
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI 65110

Dear Friends of the Commission,

We are pleased to present the Commission's 2020 report to the Supreme Court of Missouri. While 2020 has brought unprecedented challenges, the Commission has been able to successfully navigate the changes necessary and continue our important work to ensure fairness, impartiality, equal access and full participation for racial and ethnic minorities in the judicial process.

The year began with a restructuring of the Steering Committee to include the chairs and co-chairs of each subcommittee. With broader representation for oversight of the Commission's work, the Steering Committee held a retreat in March where it set out the primary areas of focus for each subcommittee for the year.

While two annual meetings were scheduled for the year, the April meeting was cancelled due to the pandemic. By October, the full Commission was able to meet virtually using Webex. Two important topics were the focus of the meeting. One was to introduce the Systemic Racism Work Group, which was formed to consider the impact of systemic racism on the justice system. Commissioners were invited to join the effort, and the work group will submit a report to the Supreme Court at the end of the year.

The second topic was a presentation about the State Justice Institute grant Missouri received to collaborate with New Jersey, Tennessee and Maricopa County, AZ, to work with the National Center for State Courts on a master jury list project. The focus of the project is to assess juror source lists for inclusivity, representation and accuracy, as well as to promulgate for all state courts best practices recommendations to ensure a diverse jury pool.

This year has shown us that the work of the Commission is more critical than ever before. Our report highlights the accomplishments of this year, but much work remains. We look forward to continuing to make our courts more accessible and responsive to the people they serve.

William Bay
Lisa White Hardwick
Mikah K. Thompson
Michael Middleton

Co-Chairs



Mr. William Bay

Mr. William Bay, partner at Thompson Coburn, has been recognized as a top litigator by The Best Lawyers in America. He is the past chair of the American Bar Association (ABA) Section of Litigation, the largest section in the ABA, has been a member of the ABA Board of Governors and chaired its Finance Committee. Mr. Bay is also a member of the American Law Institute, the leading independent organization in the United States that works to improve the law. Mr. Bay is the 2018-2020 chair of the 600-member ABA House of Delegates, the policy-making body of the association.



The Honorable Lisa White Hardwick

Ms. Lisa White Hardwick is a judge on the Missouri Court of Appeals, for the Western District. After graduating from Harvard Law School, she joined the firm of Shook, Hardy & Bacon in 1985 and was a partner from 1992 to 2000. She was also elected to the Jackson County Legislature, serving as an at-large representative from 1993 to 2000. She was appointed to the 16th Judicial Circuit as a trial judge in January 2000 and to the Court of Appeals in May 2001. Judge Hardwick served as Chief Judge of the Western District from 2010-2012.



Ms. Mikah K. Thompson

Professor Thompson joined CREF in 2018 and became a co-chair in October 2019. She is an Associate Professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. Professor Thompson earned her Bachelor of Science degree in communications from Missouri State University and her law degree from Washington University in St. Louis. Her research centers on the intersection of evidentiary law and critical race theory. Recently, Professor Thompson has written about juror bias, describing the impact racial stereotypes have on the way in which jurors assess trial evidence. Prior to joining the faculty, Professor Thompson was the Director of Affirmative Action and Title IX Coordinator for the UMKC campus.



Mr. Michael Middleton, Emeritus

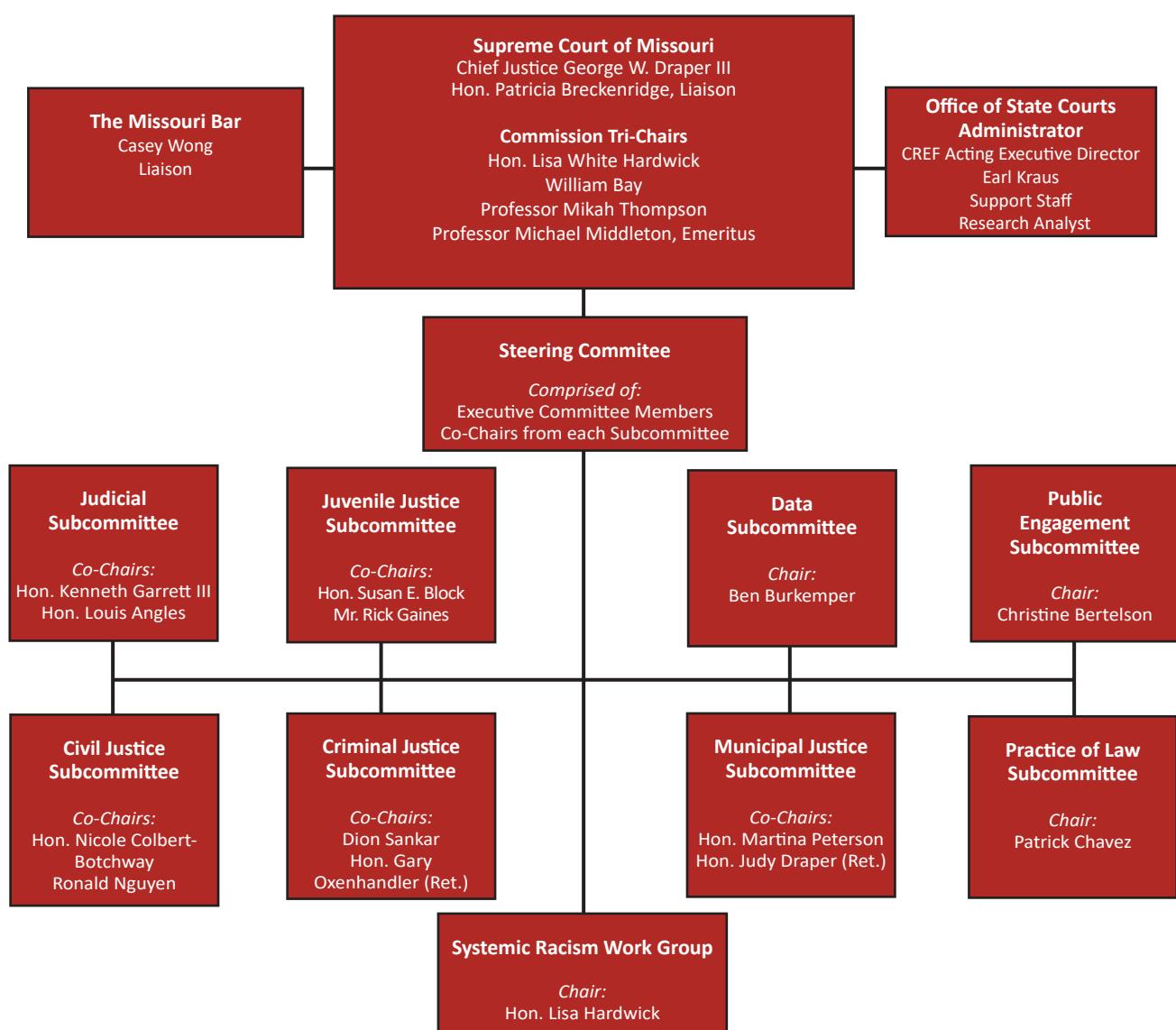
Professor Middleton, Deputy Chancellor Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Law, joined the law faculty at the University of Missouri in 1985 after an illustrious career with the federal government in Washington. He was a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice and in 1977 was appointed Assistant Deputy Director of the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Health Education and Welfare. In addition, Professor Middleton was an integral part of the EEOC on the federal level, serving as director of the Office of Systemic Programs and Associate General Counsel, Trial Division and finally, Director of the St. Louis district office prior to assuming his role at the University. Professor Middleton retired after serving as Interim President of the University of Missouri System and as Interim President of Lincoln University.

COMMISSION ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS STRUCTURE



*Supreme Court of Missouri judges (left to right):
Judge Laura Denvir Stith, Judge W. Brent Powell, Judge Paul C. Wilson, Chief Justice George W. Draper III,
Judge Mary R. Russell, Judge Patricia Breckenridge, Judge Zel M. Fischer*

The leaders of CREF have changed since our last annual report with a new Steering Committee and several new subcommittee chairs to support our endeavors.



COMMISSION GOALS AND SUBCOMMITTEE CHARGES

In October of 2015, the Supreme Court established the Commission and set out the goals it was to achieve. The Commission's goal is to examine and review current practices, and to recommend measures to ensure fairness, impartiality, equal access and full participation for racial and ethnic minorities in the judicial process and in the practice of law. Consistent with these goals, the Commission shall:

- Identify any barriers to access and fairness in the judicial system and legal profession;
- Review the applicable constitutional provisions; statutes; ethical, procedural and court operating rules that may impact these issues; and such other materials as the commission believes would be helpful to its study and the development of its recommendations;
- Seek public input and engagement through written suggestions, public hearings or such other avenues as the commission believes helpful, as well as collaborate and participate in the "Minority Community Engagement" project with the National Center for State Courts and National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts;
- Conduct, with the consent of the Court, surveys and study additional research regarding racial and ethnic equity in the justice system and in the legal profession.

The Commission shall focus its work in six areas — the judicial system, generally; the civil justice system; the criminal justice system; the juvenile justice system; the municipal justice system; and the practice of law — and will have subcommittees in these areas and such other subcommittees as needed to facilitate its work. Its focus may include but is not limited to the following:

- The existence and impact of any racial and ethnic bias and/or disparities within the judicial system and the practice of law;
- Changes to court rules, regulations, laws and/or practices to improve meaningful access to or participation in the judicial system and the practice of law by racial and ethnic minorities;
- Measures to ensure that all persons within the judicial system and practice of law refrain from manifesting bias or prejudice, by words or conduct, based on race or ethnicity;
- Measures to address any implicit or other bias within the judicial system and legal profession;
- The availability of effective legal representation for racial and ethnic minorities within the judicial system;
- Measures to enhance racial and ethnic diversity in the selection, retention and promotion of judicial officers, court staff and professionals in the legal community; and
- Measures to enhance understanding of the practices, procedures and proper role of the state's courts.

The Commission may act to implement its recommendations as authorized by the Court.

The Commission has since formed two new subcommittees to assist the original six subcommittees in their endeavors. The Data Subcommittee is charged with reviewing and assessing other CREF subcommittees' requests for information and data, including assessments of feasibility, and identifying proposed changes to case management or other data collection methods used by the judiciary. The Public Engagement Subcommittee is charged with responding to public inquiries, supporting CREF subcommittee public sessions, serving as a conduit for the exchange of information, and communicating the mission, priorities and work of the Commission. The Commission also has formed a Steering Committee and a Systemic Racism Work Group.

Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness

2015

- CREF is established by the Supreme Court of Missouri identifying six subcommittees: judicial system, civil justice system, criminal justice system, juvenile justice system, municipal justice system and practice of law.

2016

- Supreme Court of Missouri amends the annual attorney enrollment form seeking voluntary racial and ethnic demographics on the profession based on CREF recommendation.
- The Criminal Justice Subcommittee submits a report reviewing the collateral consequences of convictions in Missouri.
- October 27 - CREF submits an initial report and 13 recommendations to the Supreme Court of Missouri.

2017

- As recommended by CREF, the Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA) initiates a demographic study of the Missouri Judiciary in consultation with the National Center for State Courts.
- February - March - CREF holds public listening sessions in Columbia, Kansas City, St. Louis and Springfield, to solicit feedback and suggestions for the work of the Commission.
- May 15-17 - CREF hosts 2017 National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts Conference in St. Louis attended by representatives from court systems around the country, as well as local judges, attorneys and members of the public. This included developing all the programming, identifying and inviting speakers, and planning social events.
- June - September - CREF holds public listening sessions in St. Louis, Springfield and Kansas City to solicit feedback and suggestions about juvenile justice issues.
- The juror questionnaire developed for the Show-Me Jury system provides for optional reporting of racial and ethnic demographics.
- December 19 - the Supreme Court of Missouri establishes the Data Subcommittee and the Public Engagement Subcommittee of CREF.

2018

- Practice of Law Subcommittee conducts managing partners' roundtable in Springfield.
- Civil Justice System Subcommittee holds Civil Justice listening sessions in St. Louis and Kansas City to solicit feedback and suggestions about the civil justice system.

- Effective July 18, 2019, the Supreme Court of Missouri revised SCR 18.05 and 15.05 to include an annual minimum requirement of one credit hour devoted to one of the following: cultural competency, diversity, inclusion or implicit bias, and amended regulation 15.01 to include information regarding related training based on CREF recommendation.
- On October 30, 2019, the Supreme Court of Missouri adopted anti-bias jury instructions for both civil and criminal cases (civil MAI 2.00 and criminal jury trials MAI-CR 4th 400.02, 402.01) effective January 1, 2020, based on CREF recommendation. In civil matters the order requires the anti-bias instruction be given before jury selection and reread as part of final jury instructions to the empaneled jury before deliberations. In criminal matters, the order requires that the anti-bias instruction be given before jury selection and included with the instructions that accompany the jurors into deliberations.
- OSCA demographic study completed - The Commission completed *Diversity and Inclusion in the Missouri Judiciary*, a report providing information about the diversity of the Missouri Judiciary, including gender, race/ethnicity, race/ethnicity and gender combined, and age. Each of the variables has its own section in the report and includes results from a 2017 National Center for State Courts study, 2018 payroll data of state paid employees, 2018 self-reported survey data of non-state paid employees, and United States Census Bureau data where available. The report serves as a baseline for future reference and to make future decisions to address disparities found within the Missouri Judiciary as a whole.
- Effective July 18, 2019, the Supreme Court of Missouri adopted new paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the Comments of subdivision 2-2.3 including clarification of conduct that constitutes bias or prejudice and harassment, how to determine a rule violation, and examples of harassment as anticipated by the rule based on CREF recommendation.
- Effective July 18, 2019, the Supreme Court of Missouri adopted a new subdivision (g) of subdivision 4-8.4 and a new paragraph 4 of the Comments of 4-8.4 providing a clarification of attorney misconduct including a list of protected categories based on CREF recommendation.
- In response to a recommendation of the Criminal Justice Subcommittee, the Supreme Court of Missouri directed the Clerk of the Court to request Governor Mike Parson make appointments and reactivate the Judicial Sentencing Commission, which was subsequently reconstituted. Likewise the Supreme Court made its appointments to the Commission.

2020

- Practice of Law Subcommittee conducts roundtable in St. Louis.
- The Judicial Conference approved two resolutions submitted by the Judicial Justice Subcommittee. The first is to introduce and support legislation to lower the minimum age of a juror from 21 to 18 years. The second is to introduce and support legislation removing impediments to the availability of appropriate government records for use in compiling master jury lists.
- Systemic Racism Work Group was established by the commission and will be led by Judge Hardwick.
- Civil Eyewitness MAI recommendations have been drafted and sent to the Executive Committee for review.
- Ms. Hannaford-Agor shared that a State Justice Institute grant was approved for a master jury list project, and provided information about jury processes and best practices to ensure a diverse jury pool. Options for sources for the master jury list will be researched as part of the project.
- *Ensuring Diversity in Missouri Jury Pools and Juries* and *Confronting Systemic Racism in Missouri Courts*, both sessions held during the October 5, 2020, commission meeting, were recorded. The commission plans to schedule webinars to show *Confronting Systemic Racism in Missouri Courts* with live moderators, allowing for CLE credits to be earned.

2020 SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITY SUMMARIES

The newly formed Steering Committee met March 5, 2020, to determine the focus areas for the Commission subcommittees. The following sections are separated by subcommittee and reflect highlights of the activities undertaken by the listed subcommittees in this reporting period. Their efforts are outlined by the identified goals and considerations along with a year-end status that is included at the conclusion of each section.

Civil Justice System Subcommittee

The Civil Justice System Subcommittee's top areas of focus:

- Review the Jury Orientation video to address implicit bias
- Eyewitness testimony Civil MAI similar to Criminal MAI 310.02

Year-end status:

The subcommittee will draft language and proposed changes to the Eyewitness Identification Testimony Civil MAI, similar to the Criminal MAI 310.02, and send it to the Executive Committee for review.

The subcommittee surveyed presiding judges about the use of the implicit bias video prior to jury selection. The committee also researched what other states and the federal government are using. The subcommittee proposes to use the current video and ask each court in Missouri to provide their own introduction to the video. The proposal will be submitted to the Executive Committee for review.

Criminal Justice System Subcommittee

The Criminal Justice System Subcommittee's top areas of focus:

- Review sources and reporting of data available within the criminal justice system and recommend action for distribution and improvement of collection and use of data in the area of expungement
- Recommend multi-branch task force to address adequacy of legal representation for criminal defendants

Year-end status:

The subcommittee has been researching expungement laws and court procedure in California and Kansas to evaluate Missouri's current expungement law and the impact of fees, forms and procedure for those attempting to access expungement. The subcommittee is in the process of developing recommendations about these issues. To date, the subcommittee has met with criminal defense attorneys, prosecutors, legislators and legal scholars regarding Missouri's expungement statutes and whether to pursue changes to the current law. Those potential changes relate to issues concerning what crimes are currently subject to closure from public view versus what crimes are subject to true expungement, i.e., judicial pardons, equal access to expungement for indigent petitioners, and barriers or impediments to expungement created by currently existing procedure. The subcommittee's research has also focused on ways to put data collection into statute, similar to other states that have rules mandating the collection of racial data. In addition, the subcommittee is working with the Data Subcommittee to obtain available information for expungements filed by county and to determine what, if any, data is available concerning the race of petitioners and applications for the waiver of fees associated with expungement petitions and proceedings.

Judicial Justice System Subcommittee

The Judicial Justice System Subcommittee's primary areas of focus:

- Recommend data sources to use to develop jury pools
- Recommend mandatory annual bias training for court personnel

Year-end status:

The subcommittee submitted two resolutions to the Judicial Conference. The first resolved that the Judicial Conference Committee introduce and support legislation lowering the minimum age of a juror from 21 to 18 years. The second resolved that the Judicial Conference Legislative Committee introduce and support legislation that would remove impediments to the availability of appropriate government records for use in compiling master jury lists. The Judicial Conference approved both resolutions.

Juvenile Justice System Subcommittee

The Juvenile Justice System Subcommittee has spent the year focusing on the following areas of interest:

- Identify a best practice model to address the School to Prison Pipeline that disproportionately impacts minority students (St. Louis County models)
- Propose forms for Miranda warnings for juveniles, and policy and guidelines regarding admissibility of statements from juveniles

Year-end status:

The subcommittee presented two recommendations to the full Commission for vote. The first recommendation to appoint the Executive Director of the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association to the Commission was approved by the Commission. The second recommendation for the Supreme Court of Missouri to create a Juvenile Law Committee to provide guidance and recommendations to the Supreme Court about all juvenile matters was approved by the Commission.

Additionally, after reviewing case law and current rules and statutes, the subcommittee determined that rule revision and legislative recommendation for statutory change was the appropriate manner to provide for legal representation for juveniles at the earliest stage of contact with the justice system. The subcommittee has drafted a proposed rule change and statute revision.

Practice of Law Subcommittee

The Practice of Law Subcommittee's primary areas of focus:

- Survey attorneys (judges and court personnel) about bias and prejudice in the practice of law/judicial system
- Complete roundtable discussion in St. Louis

Year-end status:

As part of the effort to identify diversity and inclusion issues affecting practitioners in the region, the subcommittee held a roundtable session in St. Louis September 30, 2020. Approximately 15 individuals participated along with subcommittee members. Law firms are interested in resources used by the commission, as well as information related to best practices and good mentor programs to impact implicit bias efforts. Participants shared reactions to the new CLE requirements.

The subcommittee continues to work on the attorney survey development and distribution.

Municipal Justice System Subcommittee

The Municipal Justice System Subcommittee's primary areas of focus:

- Develop measures to evaluate compliance and impact of municipal reforms on racial and ethnic minorities
- Consider mandatory adoption and use of model rules for indigency determination

Year-end status:

The subcommittee is currently developing measures to evaluate compliance and impact of municipal reforms on racial and ethnic minorities by collecting and analyzing data regarding the annual number of suspension/revocation charges filed and the annual number of driver's license suspension requests submitted to the Missouri Department of Revenue by the courts due to the defendant's failure to appear in court for nonminor traffic offenses. The subcommittee has collected complete data from Kansas City, Springfield, Jackson County and all Missouri circuit court operated municipal divisions. The committee has collected partial data from the department of revenue, child support enforcement and St. Louis County. The subcommittee is attempting to collect full data from St. Louis, Columbia and Jefferson City, the department of revenue and child support enforcement, and all other municipal courts in the state of Missouri to assess this issue, although not all of these entities collect data regarding race. The subcommittee will continue to liaise with The Costs Fines and Fees Subcommittee of The Criminal Justice Task Force, the CREF Data Committee, OSCA and the Missouri Municipal and Associate Circuit Judges Association regarding data collection and analysis. The subcommittee is also researching national data, programs, statutes and information to further assess this issue. Preliminary data suggests there may be a disproportionate impact on racial and ethnic minorities in Missouri to warrant further analysis. Once all possible data is collected, the subcommittee will review all steps of the legal process to determine what areas can be addressed to reduce this disparity in the state of Missouri, develop recommendations to address these issues at all steps of the process and submit a report of the final statistics, conclusions and recommendations to the CREF Steering Committee for further consideration.

Public Engagement Subcommittee

The Public Engagement Subcommittee's main areas of focus:

- Developing a marketing plan to inform and promote the work of the Commission
- Collecting notes from listening sessions
- Advising the Commission about communication opportunities

Year-end status:

The subcommittee continues to provide relevant materials through its website. Opportunities for communication via the best channels are being considered as the work of the Commission continues.

Data Subcommittee

The Data Subcommittee's primary area of focus has been to work with research staff at OSCA to ascertain what other data may be/should be available in the statewide case management system, which is named Show-Me Courts.

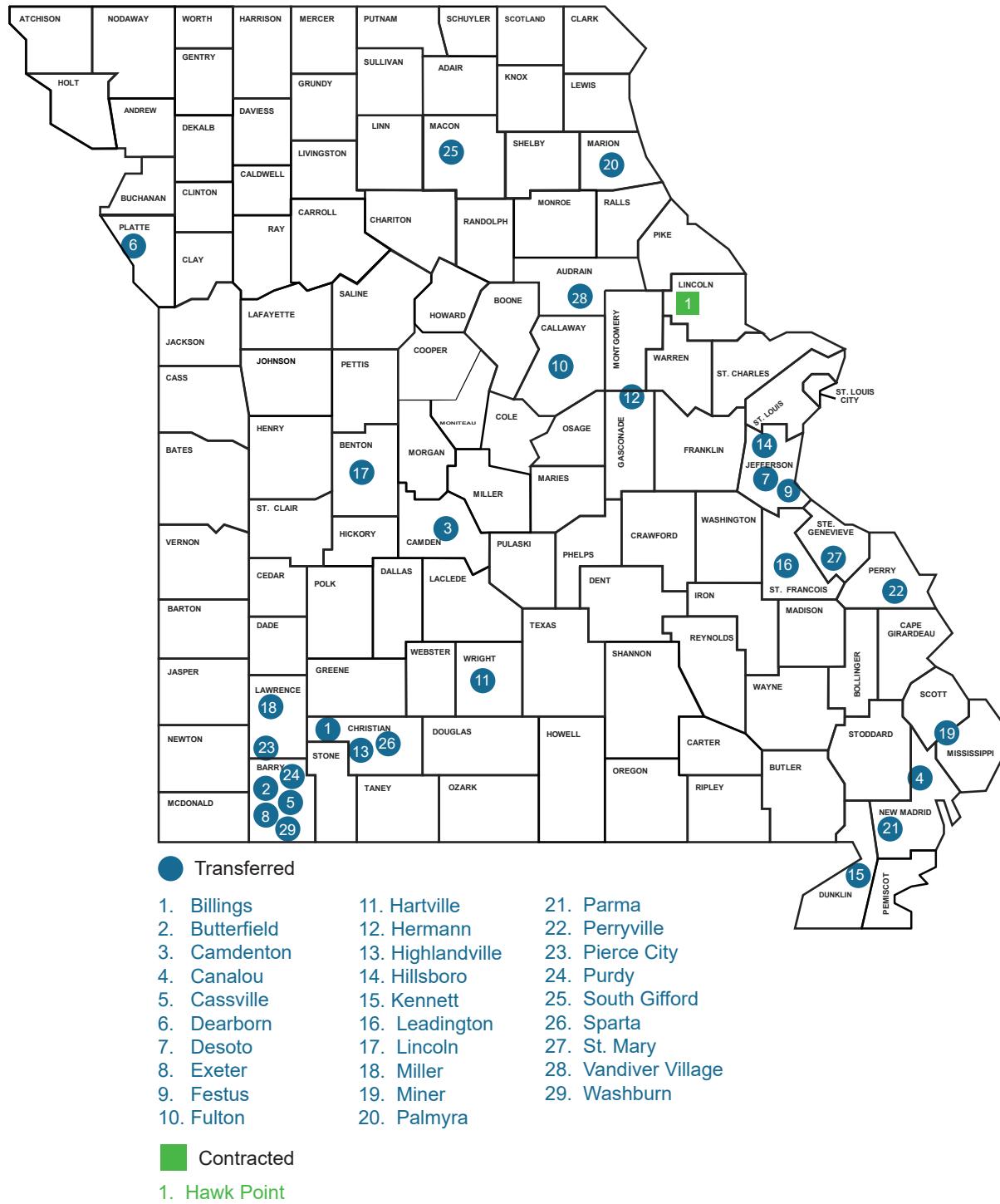
Year-end status:

The subcommittee researched the current case management system regarding collection of race and ethnicity data. While Missouri's race and ethnicity data for criminal and juvenile cases is good, the committee has recommended a pilot to collect civil case data. There are legal impediments, however as it is not a requirement for courts to collect race and ethnicity information.

MUNICIPAL UPDATES IN MISSOURI

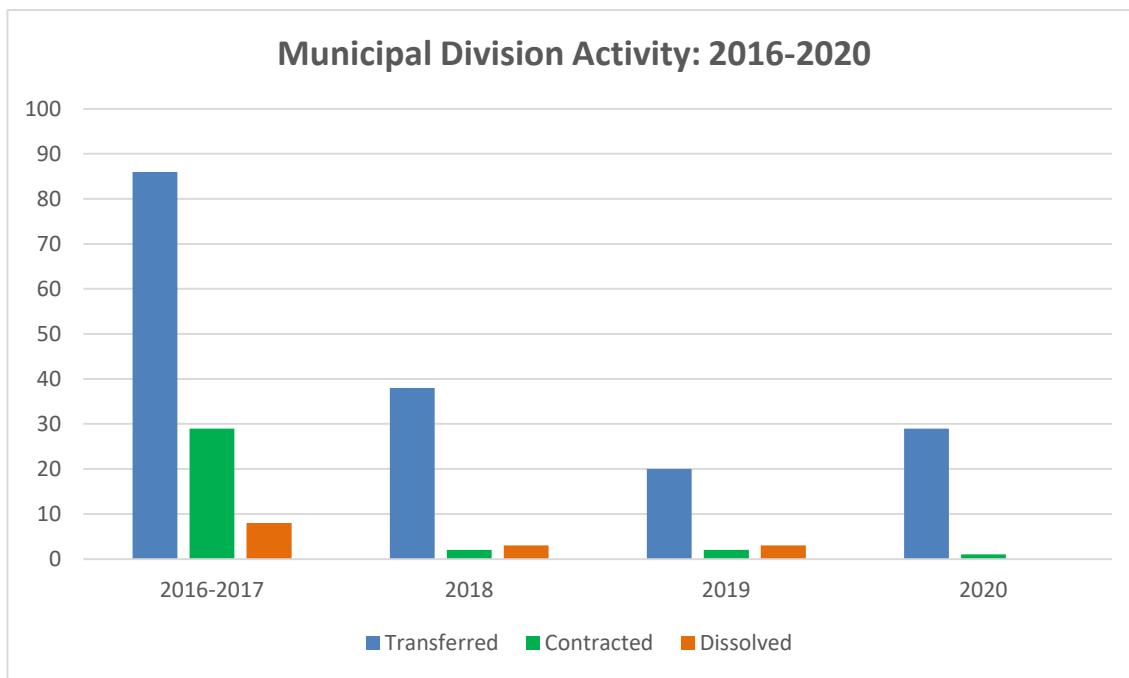
At the time CREF was formed, Missouri had approximately 600 municipal divisions, many with unique governing structures that could differ from circuit to circuit. Today, municipal jurisdictions are categorized as either stand alone, transferred, or contracted. A stand alone municipal division is heard in a stand alone location with a municipal judge(s) and clerk(s). A contracted municipal division is heard in another municipality's stand alone location with its municipal judge(s) and clerk(s), but the contracted municipality's case management, finances, etc. remain separate. A transferred municipal division is when a stand alone division is heard in the associate circuit division by an associate judge.

As represented on the map below, between November 2, 2019, and December 31, 2020, 29 municipal divisions transferred to the associate circuit court and one municipal division contracted with another municipal division.



Efforts to collect municipal data have improved since the formation of the Commission in late 2015. The Office of State Courts Administrator developed a municipal portal for municipal divisions to use to file monthly caseload reports and to update personnel and court information, such as status, address, etc. Municipal divisions also use the portal to report annual compliance with the Supreme Court's minimum operating standards.

The chart below represents the numbers of municipal divisions that have transferred, contracted, or dissolved, corresponding to the reporting periods used for CREF annual reports. These numbers more accurately reflect the actual numbers of divisions that transferred, contracted, or dissolved during the corresponding time periods and are reflective of the improved collection of data now possible from the use of the municipal portal.



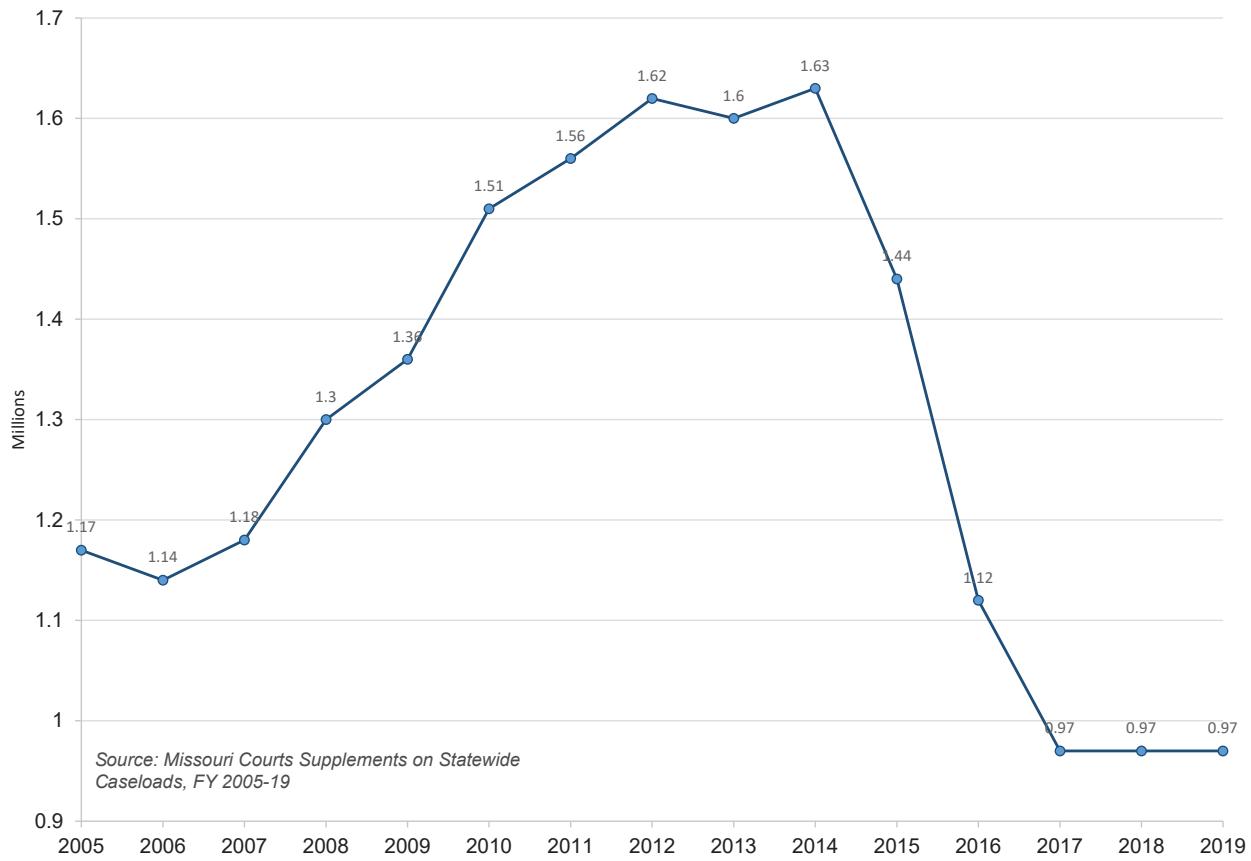
For the five-year period from 2016-2020, the total numbers are the following:

- 173 municipal divisions have transferred
- 34 municipal divisions have contracted
- 14 municipal divisions have dissolved

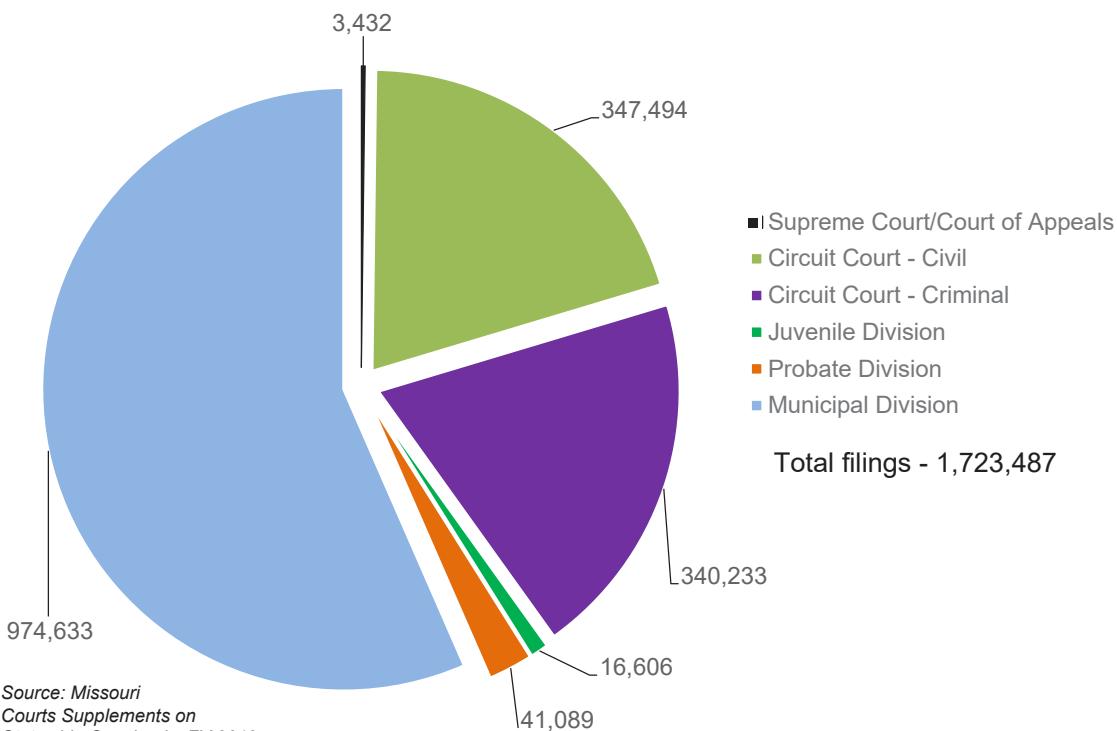
These changes have improved efficiency, standardization of procedures, and accessibility and availability of the municipal divisions, resulting in improved services to litigants.

As of December 31, 2020, there were 281 stand alone municipal divisions, 34 contracted municipal divisions and 310 municipal divisions being heard at the associate circuit court.

Number of municipal court filings in Missouri (FY 2005-2019)



Number of total statewide court filings, FY 2019



LIST OF COMMISSIONERS

The Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness selected Commissioners from across Missouri who represent various parts of the judicial system. Attorneys, judges, law enforcement, court personnel and representatives from academia have a voice in the process of creating systematic changes within the courts to ensure racial and ethnic fairness for all Missourians. The following members currently comprise the Commission:



Pictured are Commission members present at the CREF meeting held October 8, 2019.
The October 5, 2020, meeting was held virtually.

*Members of the Systemic Racism Work Group

+Members of the Steering Committee

Executive Committee

+Chief Justice George W. Draper III (Jefferson City)
Supreme Court of Missouri

+The Honorable Patricia Breckenridge, Liaison (Jefferson City)
Supreme Court of Missouri

++The Honorable Lisa White Hardwick, Co-Chair (Kansas City)
Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District

+Mr. William R. Bay, Co-Chair (St. Louis)
Thompson Coburn

+Professor Mikah Thompson, Co-Chair (Kansas City)
University of Missouri - Kansas City School of Law

+Professor Michael A. Middleton, Co-Chair Emeritus (Columbia)
Deputy Chancellor Emeritus - University of Missouri School
of Law

Staff: Earl Kraus, Acting Executive Director (Jefferson City)
Office of State Courts Administrator

Civil Justice System Subcommittee

+The Honorable Nicole Colbert-Botchway, Co-Chair (St. Louis)
Judge, 22nd Judicial Circuit

+Mr. Ronald Nguyen, Co-Chair (Kansas City)
The Law Office of Ronald Nguyen

Mr. Allan Seidel (Trenton)
Seidel Havens and Dennis

Professor David Achtenberg (Kansas City)
University of Missouri - Kansas City School of Law

The Honorable Angela Turner Quigless (St. Louis)
Missouri Court of Appeals, Eastern District

Ms. Jenelle M. Beavers (Columbia)
University of Missouri System

Mr. Dan Cranshaw (Kansas City)
Polsinelli

Criminal Justice System Subcommittee

+Mr. Dion Sankar, Co-Chair (Kansas City)
Jackson County Courthouse

++The Honorable Gary Oxenhandler (Ret.), Co-Chair
(Columbia), Oxenhander Law

Mr. James R. Hobbs (Kansas City)
Wyrsh Hobbs & Mirakian

The Honorable Annette Llewellyn (St. Louis)
Judge, 22nd Judicial Circuit

Professor Susan McGraugh (St. Louis)
St. Louis University School of Law

Mr. Andrew Popplewell (Columbia)
Eng & Woods

*Ms. Lesley Smith (Kansas City)
Public Defender's Office

Ms. Christine Krug (St. Louis)
Missouri Office of Attorney General

The Honorable Rebecca S. McGinley (Albany)
Judge, 4th Judicial Circuit

Designee Lt. Col. Malik Henderson, Asst. Supt. (Jefferson City)
Missouri State Highway Patrol

Judicial System Subcommittee

+The Honorable Kenneth R. Garrett III, Co-Chair (Independence)
Judge, 16th Judicial Circuit

+The Honorable Louis Angles, Co-Chair (Liberty)
Judge, 7th Judicial Circuit

Mr. Gonzalo Fernandez (St. Louis)
Devereaux, Stokes, Noland, Fernandez & Leonard

*The Honorable Nancy Rahmeyer (Springfield)
Missouri Court of Appeals, Southern District

Ms. Dorothy White-Coleman (St. Louis)
White Coleman & Associates

The Honorable Charles Curless (Lamar)
Senior Associate Circuit Judge, 28th Judicial Circuit

Professor Chuck Henson (Columbia)
University of Missouri - Columbia School of Law

The Honorable Robin Ransom (St. Louis)
Judge, Missouri Court of Appeals

Juvenile Justice System Subcommittee

+*The Honorable Susan E. Block, Co-Chair (St. Louis)
Paule, Camazine & Blumenthal

+Mr. Rick Gaines, Co-Chair (Clayton)
Family Court of St. Louis County

The Honorable Sandra Hemphill, (Clayton)
Judge, 21st Judicial Circuit

Professor Douglas E. Abrams (Columbia)
University of Missouri - Columbia School of Law

Mr. Jacob Zimmerman (Cape Girardeau)
Zimmerman Law

The Honorable Corey A. Carter (Kansas City)
Municipal Judge, 16th Judicial Circuit

Ms. Marcia Hazelhorst (Jefferson City)
Executive Director, Missouri Juvenile Justice Association

Municipal Justice System Subcommittee

+*The Honorable Martina Peterson, Co-Chair (Kansas City)
Municipal Judge, 16th Judicial Circuit

+The Honorable Judy P. Draper (Ret.), Co-Chair (Bellefontaine)
21st Judicial Circuit

Professor Karen Tokarz (St. Louis)
Washington University School of Law

Ms. Christine Krug (St. Louis)
Missouri Office of Attorney General

The Honorable Todd Thornhill (Springfield)
Municipal Judge, 31st Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Douglas Beach (Ret.) (Chesterfield)
Judge, 21st Judicial Circuit

Practice of Law Subcommittee

+Mr. Patrick Chavez, Co-Chair (St. Louis)
Edward Jones

Ms. Jennifer Placzek, (Springfield)
Placzek, Winget & Placzek

The Honorable Lajuana Counts (Kansas City)
U.S. Magistrate Judge, Western District of Missouri

*Ms. Crista Hogan (Springfield)
Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association

Mr. Michael A. Williams (Kansas City)

Williams Dirks Dameron

Mr. Richard Bien (Kansas City)

Lathrop & Gage

*Ms. Mischa Buford Epps (Columbia)
Attorney at Law

*Professor Kimberly Norwood (St. Louis)
Washington University School of Law

Professor Geetha Rao Sant (St. Louis)
Washington University School of Law

Ms. Tracie Ransom (Kansas City)
Ransom Strategies Group, LLC

Ms. Sheena Hamilton (St. Louis)
Dowd Bennett

*Mr. H. Wes Pratt (Springfield)
Missouri State University

Mr. Leonard Searcy (Kansas City)
Shook, Hardy & Bacon

*Mr. Casey Wong, Liaison from The Missouri Bar (St. Louis)
Sandberg Phoenix

Data Subcommittee

+Mr. Ben Burkemper, Chair (St. Louis)
Court Administrator, 21st Judicial Circuit

Ms. Lynn Vogel (Clayton)
Vogel Law Office

The Honorable Kenneth R. Garrett III (Independence)
Judge, 16th Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Sandra Hemphill (Clayton)
Judge, 21st Judicial Circuit

Anne Dannerbeck Janku, Ph.D. (Columbia)
University of Missouri School of Social Work

Ms. Kristen Sanocki (St. Louis)
Thompson Coburn LLP

Public Engagement Subcommittee

+Ms. Christine Bertelson, Chair (Clayton)
Director of Strategic Communications, 21st Judicial Circuit

Ms. Farrah Fite, (Jefferson City)
The Missouri Bar

*Ms. Crista Hogan (Springfield)
Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association

Ms. Zoe Linza (St. Louis)
Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis

Ms. Victoria Mauck (Kansas City)
Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association

*Mr. H. Wes Pratt (Springfield)
Missouri State University

The Honorable Robin Ransom (St. Louis)
Judge, Missouri Court of Appeals

Mr. Booker T. Shaw (St. Louis)
Thompson Coburn

*Dr. Alisa Warren (St. Louis)
Missouri Commission on Human Rights

voice encouraging others to consider a legal career.

Judge Martina Peterson of the 16th Judicial Circuit's Kansas City Municipal Division received the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association's President's Award at its 136th Annual Meeting December 4, 2020. She received the

The Honorable Martina Petersen Judge, 16th Judicial Circuit



Judge Block was honored by the Association of Fundraising Professionals of Greater St. Louis as a recipient of their inaugural class of Changemakers. At the association's National Philanthropy Day Celebration November 19, 2020, she was recognized for her leadership in forming Caring for Kids, a nonprofit organization that serves children in St. Louis County who are at risk or involved in the juvenile court. Caring for Kids seeks to meet the urgent needs of these children, including beds, tutoring, computers and school supplies.

The Honorable Susan E. Block



The University of Missouri established the Michael A. Middleton Center for Race, Citizenship, and Justice to support and promote diverse research and engagement in critical conversations about the issues of race, citizenship and justice within and beyond the university. Professor Middleton is an MU alumna with degrees from the MU College of Arts and Science and the MU School of Law. In his 30-year relationship with the university, he has served as a university faculty member, MU deputy chancellor and UM System interim president, and was instrumental in the development of Black Studies at MU. Throughout his career, his focus has been on building bridges between people and their ideas, all with a view to creating a more unified and just future.

Former Deputy Chancellor Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Law
Professor Michael Middleton



Our Commissioners give of their time and talents to make the CREF a successful agent for change. In addition to their full-time employment, they publish, volunteer and excel in their varied fields of expertise. In this portion of the report, we recognize their efforts outside of CREF to enhance their communities.

COMMISSIONERS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AWARDS AND ACTIVITIES